

WHAT IS CLAIM IS

1. An interactive online marketplace system comprising
at least one server, a database associated with the server
5 for storing details of traders and customers including
information of products and/or services provided by the
traders, each of the traders and customers being
identified by or as at least one user having a unique
identity code, communication devices for use by the
10 traders and customers and connectable to the server, a
website associated with the server for visit by the
customers using the communication devices, and a webpage
for display on the communication device of a visiting
customer, the webpage including a directory of the traders
15 in a multi-level representation that includes hyper links
to corresponding users representing the traders based on
their identity codes for establishing a two-way online
communication channel via the server between the visiting
customer and one of the traders selected by that customer.

20

2. The interactive online marketplace system as claimed
in claim 1, wherein the directory is to be displayed in
the format of a tree diagram.

25 3. The interactive online marketplace system as claimed
in claim 1, wherein the traders in the directory are
listed according to their business nature at one level
and then product/service type at a lower level.

4. The interactive online marketplace system as claimed
in claim 3, wherein the traders in the directory are
listed according to their names, or the names of their
5 representatives, at a further lower level.

5. The interactive online marketplace system as claimed
in claim 4, wherein the names are associated with means
for obtaining information from the traders represented by
10 the names.

6. The interactive online marketplace system as claimed
in claim 4, wherein the names are associated with the
hyper links respectively to establish a said two-way
15 online communication channel between two users for a chat
session comprising sending a message.

7. The interactive online marketplace system as claimed
in claim 6, wherein the message comprises one of text and
20 voice messages.

8. The interactive online marketplace system as claimed
in claim 7, wherein the message includes sharing one of
file and webpage.

25

9. The interactive online marketplace system as claimed
in claim 4, wherein the names are selectable for adding
to a contact list included in the webpage, with each name

- 24 -

in the contact list being a hyper link to the corresponding user for communication.

10. The interactive online marketplace system as claimed
5 in claim 9, wherein the contact list includes an indication to show online status of the users represented by the names in the contact list.

11. An interactive online marketplace method comprising
10 the steps of:

(a) providing at least one server and a database associated with the server for storing details of traders and customers including information of products and/or services provided by the traders, and identifying each of
15 the traders and customers by or as at least one user having a unique identity code;

(b) providing communication devices for use by the traders and customers and connectable to the server;

(c) providing a website associated with the server for
20 visit by the customers using the communication devices; and

(d) providing a webpage for display on the communication device of a visiting customer, the webpage including a directory of the traders in a multi-level representation
25 that includes hyper links to corresponding users representing the traders based on their identity codes for establishing a two-way online communication channel via the server between the visiting customer and one of the

traders selected by that customer.

12. The interactive online marketplace method as claimed
in claim 11, step (d) includes displaying the directory
5 in the format of a tree diagram.

13. The interactive online marketplace method as claimed
in claim 11, wherein step (d) includes listing the
traders in the directory according to their business
10 nature at one level and then product/service type at a
lower level.

14. The interactive online marketplace method as claimed
in claim 13, wherein step (d) further includes listing
15 the traders in the directory according to their names, or
the names of their representatives, at a further lower
level.

15. The interactive online marketplace method as claimed
20 in claim 14, wherein step (d) further includes providing
means associated with the names for obtaining information
from the traders represented by the names.

16. The interactive online marketplace method as claimed
25 in claim 14, wherein step (d) further includes
associating the names with the hyper links respectively
to establish a said two-way online communication channel
between two users for a chat session comprising sending a

message.

17. The interactive online marketplace method as claimed
in claim 16, wherein the message comprises one of text
5 and voice messages.

18. The interactive online marketplace method as claimed
in claim 17, wherein the message includes sharing one of
file and webpage.

10

19. The interactive online marketplace method as claimed
in claim 14, wherein step (d) further includes rendering
the names selectable for adding to a contact list
included in the webpage, with each name in the contact
15 list being a hyper link to the corresponding user for
communication.

20. The interactive online marketplace method as claimed
in claim 19, wherein step (d) further includes including
20 in the contact list an indication to show online status
of the users represented by the names in the contact
list.